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TONI PRECKWINKLE

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OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR GENERAL

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April 19, 2011

Honorable Toni Preckwinkle
and Members of the Board of Commissioners
of Cook County, Illinois
118 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Independent Inspector General Quarterly Report (1st Qtr. 2011)

Dear President Preckwinkle and Members of the Board of Commissioners:

This report is written in accordance with section 2-287 of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG) Ordinance, Cook County, Ill., Ordinances 07-O-52 (2007), to apprise you of the activities of this office during the time period beginning January 1, 2011 through March 31, 2011.

In connection with the number of complaints received during the subject reporting period, please be advised that this office has received a total of 104 complaints.¹ Please be aware that during the subject reporting period, 14 OIIG investigations have been initiated. This number also includes those investigations resulting from the exercise of my own initiative (OIIG Ordinance, sec. 2-284(2)). Additionally, 16 OIIG case inquiries have been initiated during this reporting period while a total of 78 OIIG case inquiries remain pending at the present time. Two matters have been referred to other enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for further consideration and 8 cases have been referred and/or opened by the Complaint Administrator pursuant to the *Supplemental Relief Order*. The following is a list generally reflecting the issues

¹ As indicated in previous reports, upon receipt of a complaint, an OIIG complaint number is assigned to the contact and a triage/screening process of each complaint is undertaken. We will initiate a formal investigation when appropriate by assigning an OIIG case number and investigator to the matter. In order to streamline the OIIG process and maximize the number of complaints that will be subject to review, if a complaint is not initially opened as a formal investigation it may also be reviewed as an "OIIG inquiry." This level of review involves a determination of corroborating evidence before assigning an OIIG case number to the complaint. When the initial review reveals information warranting the opening of a formal investigation, an OIIG case number is assigned. Conversely, if additional information is developed to warrant the closing of the OIIG Inquiry, the matter will be closed.



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involved in the recently opened investigations while maintaining the confidentiality of OIIG investigations.

<u>No. of Investigations</u>	<u>Description of Allegations Under Review</u>
7	Unlawful Political Discrimination in the form of improper fundraising, undue political pressure by an elected official and improper employment actions;
2	Hiring irregularities;
2	Misuse of proprietary information;
1	Intimidation/assault;
2	falsification of official record.

The OIIG currently has a total of 165 matters under investigation. The number of open cases beyond 180 days of the issuance of this report is 151 due to various issues including the nature of the investigation, availability of resources and prosecutorial considerations.

During the 1st quarter of 2011, the OIIG issued 10 summary reports. The following is a description of each matter and whether an OIIG recommendation for remediation/discipline has been adopted.

IIG10-0093. On January 24, 2011, this office determined that a high ranking official within the Highway Department falsified government records. The subject employee has been terminated from service.

IIG10-0062. On January 25, 2011, this office recommended discipline involving 2 members of the Forest Preserve District when it was determined that they engaged in improper conduct involving sexual harassment, use of racial slurs, leaving assigned duties and and/or improper performance of official duties. One of the subject employees has been terminated from service. Disciplinary action is pending in connection with the other employee.

IIG10-0002. On January 25, 2011, this office issued a report addressing allegations of unlawful political discrimination involving an interview panel of Forest Preserve District supervisors who allegedly conspired to secure the hiring of a favored candidate. The preponderance of the evidence developed during the course of the investigation failed to support the allegations.

IG05-0038 and IG05-0050. The subject investigations involved an employee of the President's Office of Employment Training (POET). The evidence developed during the OIIG investigation involving seeking and receiving kickbacks/bribes from a county contractor was referred to the State's Attorney's Office for prosecutorial consideration. On November 8, 2010, the subject was convicted on 4 felony charges. His employment had been terminated on January 25, 2009.

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IIG10-0051. On March 17, 2011 the OIIG completed an investigation involving employee theft at the Cermak Aquatic Center (Forest Preserve District). The initial investigation was expanded and ultimately involved a recommendation for discipline of 17 District employees. This investigation was the subject of a public statement released on March 18, 2011 to the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District. Discipline has been imposed by the District.

IIG09-0164. This investigation involved allegations that discriminatory hiring practices were being utilized at the John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County. The allegations were not sustained by the investigation.

IIG10-0090. This investigation addressed whether a pest control contractor providing services for the Department of Corrections was in breach of its contract for its failure to provide the contracted services and wrongfully submitting fraudulent invoices for payment of such services. The preponderance of the evidence failed to establish the submission of fraudulent invoices by the contractor. Nonetheless, this investigation identified deficiencies in the process to identify and cure issues involving non-performance by contractors and W/MBE violations. The OIIG issued several recommendations for improved coordination among the DOC, Cook County Purchasing Agent and Office of Contract Compliance.

IIG10-0041. On March 30, 2011, the OIIG issued a report following an investigation to determine whether various Forest Preserve District employees were engaged in a practice of intimidation and coercion of employees or citizens through threats in an attempt to extort money. The preponderance of the evidence failed to support the allegations.

IIG09-0114. This OIIG investigation involved allegations of mismanagement of Section 8 housing assistance payments by the Cook County Housing Authority (Authority) in violation of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program requirements. The OIIG subsequently referred this matter to the HUD Office of Inspector General which conducted an audit of the Authority's nonprofit development activities. The HUD OIG audit was concluded in February 2011 and involved findings of inadequate administration of the Section 8 housing program and recommended that HUD seek reimbursement for improperly administered funds. Implementation of the recommendations is pending.

In our previous quarterly report, we addressed IIG10-0083 involving a Highway Department employee using his position as Parts Manager to fraudulently acquire equipment for personal use thereby committing the offense of theft of government property. The subject employee has been terminated from County service. This matter was referred for prosecutorial consideration and on January 24, 2011, the subject former employee was charged with theft of government property and official misconduct.

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Thank you for your time and attention to these issues. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this report further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.M. Blanchard", written in a cursive style.

Patrick M. Blanchard
Independent Inspector General
(312) 603-0364

cc: Mr. Arnold Randall, General Superintendent, Forest Preserve District
Ms. Mary Laraia, Deputy Superintendent, Forest Preserve District
Mr. Kurt Summers, Jr., Chief of Staff, office of the President
Ms. Laura Lechowicz Felicione, Legal Advisor to the President